

belt usage and improve child passenger safety, and the formation of a ground-breaking public-private partnership on airbags. We have also taken important steps to reduce the deaths and injuries brought about by alcohol use and driving. In November 1995, I signed into law legislation to help ensure that States adopt "Zero Alcohol Tolerance" laws by October 1998 for young drivers. To date, 46 States and the District of Columbia have enacted such laws.

However, drunk driving remains a serious highway safety problem. Over 40 percent of all motor vehicle deaths in 1996—17,126—were alcohol-related, and nearly 3,000 of these fatalities were young people under the age of 21. Moreover, alcohol-related automobile accidents cost our society \$45 billion every year, not including the pain and suffering endured by the victims.

We must do more to prevent the many tragic and unnecessary alcohol-related deaths and injuries that occur on our Nation's roads. That is why my Administration has called on the Congress to pass legislation helping to ensure that a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 becomes the national legal limit. Research shows that, at a BAC level of .08, drivers are impaired with regard to critical driving tasks such as braking, steering, lane changing, and exercising good judgment. The risk of being involved in a crash increases substantially when drivers have a BAC level of .08 or above. In fact, the relative risk of a driver being killed in a single-vehicle crash at .08 BAC has been estimated to be at least 11 times higher than it is for drivers who have no alcohol in their system. Yet 33 States and the District of Columbia continue to use .10 BAC as the legal limit. It is estimated that if all States were to lower their limits to .08 BAC, there would be 600 fewer alcohol-related traffic deaths every year.

I hope the Congress will enact legislation as soon as possible to help to ensure State passage of .08 BAC laws. Even before the Congress acts, however, we can take action to promote .08 BAC as the appropriate standard across the country, including on Federal property.

I therefore direct you, working with appropriate Federal agencies, the Congress, the States, safety groups, and other concerned

Americans, to report back to me within 45 days with a plan to promote the adoption of a .08 BAC legal limit. Among other things, the plan should consider:

- (1) setting a .08 BAC standard on Federal property, including in national parks and on Department of Defense installations, and ensuring strong enforcement and publicity of this standard;
- (2) encouraging tribal governments to adopt, enforce, and publicize a .08 BAC standard on highways in Indian Country that are subject to their jurisdiction; and
- (3) developing an educational campaign to help the public understand the risks associated with combining alcohol consumption and driving.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Statement on the Decision of Representative Esteban Torres Not To Seek Reelection**

*March 3, 1998*

Throughout his distinguished career in the United States Congress, Representative Esteban Torres has dedicated himself to bettering the lives of his constituents and Hispanic-Americans across the country. Representative Torres has shown true leadership in the area of civil rights and has stood steadfast in an effort to bring our country together amid all of our diversity to build a stronger community.

Congressman Torres has led efforts to provide people with the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. He has set the standard for excellence in public service and his retirement after over 15 years will be a loss felt across the country.

### **Statement on Senate Foreign Relations Committee Support for NATO Enlargement**

*March 3, 1998*

I welcome today's strong endorsement by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for admitting Poland, Hungary, and the Czech

Republic to NATO. By adding these countries as our newest allies, we will make NATO stronger, Europe more stable, and America more secure.

The United States has led the way in building an undivided, democratic, peaceful Europe. I hope we will be among the first to ratify NATO's historic enlargement. I look forward to the full Senate vote on this issue in the weeks ahead.

**Memorandum on Conducting  
"Conversations With America" To  
Further Improve Customer Service**  
*March 3, 1998*

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive  
Departments and Agencies*

*Subject:* Conducting "Conversations with America" to Further Improve Customer Service

This Administration has made significant progress toward reinventing Government to improve customer service since I issued Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," on September 11, 1993, followed by my memorandum of March 22, 1995, "Improving Customer Service." For the first time, the Federal Government's customers have been asked what they want and have been told that they have a right to expect first-class service. Now they can see the results achieved against the customer service standards that have been set in place.

On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the establishment of my Administration's reinventing Government initiative, it is time to increase efforts to engage customers in conversations about further improving Government service. This initiative—"Conversations with America"—will enable your agency to discover what is most important to its customers and what the Federal Government can do to meet their expectations. As your agency learns what Americans care about, use this information to provide service that will equal the best in business and serve as a model for others.

To carry out this effort and assure that Government works better and gets results Americans care about, I am now directing the additional steps set forth below.

**Actions.** The agencies covered by Executive Order 12862 are directed as follows:

1. Agencies shall create activities and programs, continuing throughout the year, that will engage customers in a discussion about how to improve Government service by determining the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services.

2. By no later than March 16, 1998, agencies shall designate a person within the agency to serve as the primary liaison to coordinate information and programs dealing with the "Conversations with America" initiative. Agencies shall then provide the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) with their agency's primary liaison and a list of events the agency will conduct to engage Americans in conversations about improving Government service. This monthly report should provide the date and a brief description of each event.

3. Agencies shall engage the largest number of customers possible in these conversations. The use of all forms of media is encouraged to reach the largest possible audience. Particular emphasis should be placed on conducting these conversations in the areas where agency customers live and work.

4. In 1998, agencies shall put in place a process to address customer complaints. Agency customers should be provided opportunities for finding solutions to problems, such as "Problem Solving Days" and other venues. Agencies shall track and analyze the data they receive and use it to change processes that do not serve customers well. As your agency identifies individual problems, work to solve them quickly and systemically.

5. Agencies shall use the information from "Conversations with America" and continue to track customer service measurements, then take necessary actions to change or improve how the agency operates, as appropriate. Integrate what your agency learns from its customers with your agency's strategic plans, operating plans, and performance measures required by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, reporting on financial and program performance under the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, and the Government Management Reform Act of 1994.